



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

July 23, 2009

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: Parties Interested in the Yakama Nation – Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that analyzes the reintroduction of coho salmon into mid-Columbia River basin tributaries in Chelan and Okanogan counties, Washington. The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation) is proposing to sponsor the reintroduction program; BPA is proposing to provide funding. This letter briefly explains what is being proposed, outlines our environmental review process and schedule, and invites you to meetings where you can learn more and comment on the proposal.

Proposal – The reintroduction project is an effort to restore coho salmon to the Methow and Wenatchee basins using information and techniques developed as part of the Yakama Nation’s Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Feasibility Project. The Yakama Nation has also prepared a Master Plan to guide the development of the reintroduction project.

The proposed project would involve use of existing hatchery facilities, construction of some new permanent and temporary facilities for broodstock development, and modification of existing ponds or side channels to serve as semi-natural rearing areas for juvenile coho salmon. Over the next 20-25 years, the project would develop a locally adapted, self-sustaining population of coho in the Mid-Columbia Basin, capable of supporting harvest.

The EIS will help BPA understand the potential impacts of the proposal. During this process, we will be working with the Yakama Nation as well as with other federal, state and local agencies, landowners, and interest groups.

Public Meetings – As BPA initiates the process for assessing the potential environmental impacts of the project, we would like to hear from you. What questions do you have? What resources should we analyze? Are there other alternatives we should consider? We have scheduled two public scoping meetings to hear your ideas and accept comments related to the scope of the EIS that will be prepared:

Thursday, August 20, 2009
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Chelan Fire District 3 Community Center
228 Chumstick Highway
Leavenworth, WA 98826

Friday, August 21, 2009
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Methow Valley Community Center
201 South Methow Valley Highway
Twisp, WA 98856

At these meetings, we will provide a brief presentation of the proposal, beginning about 7:00 p.m. We will take comments and answer questions during the presentation. Prior to and following the presentation, members of the project team will be available to answer questions, accept oral and written comments, and provide maps and other information about the project. You may stop by anytime during the open house.

Other Ways to Comment - If you cannot come to the meeting, you can still comment. Please submit comments to us by **September 15, 2009**. You may submit comments to BPA online at: www.bpa.gov/comment or fax your comments to (503) 230-3285. You also may call us with your comments toll free at (800) 622-4519. Please refer to "Yakama Nation - Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Project" in your comments. We will post all comments we receive on our web site at www.bpa.gov/comment.

Process and Schedule - Starting late this summer you may see BPA staff or contractors in the area as they conduct environmental surveys. If we require access to private property, we will contact property owners for permission through a separate mailing in the next few weeks.

The information we gather in our environmental studies will be published in a draft EIS that we expect will be available for review and comment in fall 2010. The environmental review process has been estimated to take about 18 months, with a decision on whether and how to proceed expected by spring 2011.

If you would like to receive a copy of the draft EIS, please indicate on the enclosed reply card whether you would like to receive it by regular or electronic mail. If you would like to be taken off the project mailing list, please mark the box on the card. **If you do not return the reply card, you will be removed from the mailing list for this project.**

For More Information - To find out more about the project please go to BPA's Web site www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/nepadocs.aspx, and click on "Project Reviews - Active," "Mid-Columbia Coho Restoration Project EIS." If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact the environmental project lead, Bruce Hollen, toll free at (800) 282-3713, or at (503) 230-5756; or by e-mail bahollen@bpa.gov .

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bruce Hollen
Bruce Hollen
Environmental Protection Specialist

Enclosure:
Comment Form
Reply Card